

**YOU CAN'T
READ HEBREW?**

**Let me prove
you wrong**

By Stephen Ng

*This book is dedicated to my wife Ferlene,
and to my two children Shaun and Alyson,
who are learning Hebrew together with me. Above all,
glory to God who helped me to pick up Hebrew within
such a short time. Praise the Lord!*

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Foreword

One of my lecturers in Old Testament joked that Hebrew was God's own personal language, the one God spoke when creating the world. This is obviously untrue. People in every corner of the world pray to our God in hundreds of languages every single day. The Bible has been translated into more tongues than any other book, and remains the most highly published text worldwide.

Translation work is excellent, and gets better with each passing year. Here in Malaysia, the Berita Baik version remains an excellent Bahasa paraphrase, and the newer Alkitab Versi Borneo and forthcoming Alkitab Suci are labors of great love and great scholarship. Chinese and Tamil translations have always been good, and continue to get stronger with each new publication. The number of English versions available is truly dizzying. Why on earth would someone bother learning Hebrew?

If I am honest, I do not think that Hebrew (or Greek) is truly an essential skill for most pastoral leaders, let alone for the common Christian. In many seminaries, we force students to take language courses; they pass the exams, breathe a sigh of relief, and immediately forget everything they learned. It is a waste of time and effort. After all, so many of the insights to be gained from the original languages are already outlined in the infinite commentaries and articles available in even the smallest seminary or university library. Today's people of faith do not need to do the work themselves. We can let the scholars do it for us, and spend our time and energy doing something more productive.

But then, here in Southeast Asia, we know that productivity is not always the best measure of value.

Reading the Bible in its original language can truly bring great insights into the narrative of faith, that great love story between a passionate, faithful God and a wayward, wandering humanity. We were created to be loved; I think Genesis is clear on that. But is that

love *ahav*, a love characterized by emotion and longing? Is it *chesed*, the fidelity and dependency between a vassal king and his emperor? Is it *racham*, like a mother loves her own child? Is it a love founded in *tsadiq* and *mishpat*, the practice of righteousness and justice? Or is there no word that can truly describe it, but only the most passionate, metaphorical language? Deuteronomy, Ruth, Hosea, Leviticus, and Song of Songs each witness to a different aspect of God's love, aspects that tend to disappear in translation.

Simply gaining a feeling for the way that the Hebrews told of their God in their own language can help draw us much closer to our Beloved as well. The cadence of Hebrew narrative, cause and effect, one thing leading to the next, and, and, and... is usually lost in the process of conversion to modern language. We also are unable to fully appreciate the vast passages of poetry in the Bible without reading in Hebrew. Our Bible is not language specific, but in these respects at least, perhaps our Muslim sisters and brothers have the right idea.

For me, however, the real reason to read the Bible in Hebrew is found simply in the sheer pleasure of it. Hebrew is a beautiful language, one that refuses to roll easily off the tongue, that demands to be tasted and savored before each word is pronounced aloud. It is not at all difficult to imagine that this culture, the one that produced such beautiful words about God, is the one which God first chose to carry the message of love and light into the world. And we are told that God's purpose for us is to have life, and to have it abundantly. We are made for joy, and the scriptural language can bring us that.

For we who are Christians, joy is concentrated most powerfully and specifically in the incarnate Word of God, the divine come to be among us in the person of Jesus Christ. He loves us to the end, and directs us to place love of God and others as our greatest impulses in life. Encountering the written word of God, which points to the True Word of God, in the language it was written can only help us to know, and to love, Jesus more—and by extension to love the world that He loves. Indeed, studying the Hebrew language is a labor of love.

I have spoken of the love, but the labor also requires a brief word. Learning a language is difficult, and learning an ancient language is often more difficult. This is not because of some feature of the language itself, but rather because of the way in which it is generally learned or taught. Attend a class teaching Bahasa Malaysia or Mandarin in any school in this country, and you will find students being encouraged to speak with one another, to find creative ways of using language, to treat it as a means of communication. But if you take a course in ancient Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic, etc... prepare yourself for the endless memorizing of charts.

Humans create language in order to share needs and ideas with one another. This is as true for a dead language as it is for a living one. It is also true for a scriptural language. Our ancient ancestors in the faith knew certain things about God and about life in God's world that they wanted to share with others. They wrote them down in order to communicate them. And if we faithful people are right, the Holy Spirit also desires to communicate through those old words. Why do we treat the language of faith as if it were dead? It is spoken even today in a living scripture by a living God to take a people who are dead and make them alive.

People working in scholarship and higher education have not had the opportunity to incorporate modern language education methods in their teaching yet, though it is starting to happen. In Malaysia, however, there is a special opportunity to get ahead of the game. After all, most people in this country have facility in at least two, if not more, modern languages. We have already spent considerable time and energy carving out the neural pathways necessary for bilingual living. Moreover, we have done so in classrooms using modern techniques, through conversation and creativity, and we already know it is possible! Learning Hebrew is truly no more difficult than learning Bahasa Malaysia, and it is much easier than Chinese, English, Tamil, or most of the other tongues spoken every day in this beautiful place. So, while there will be labor involved, learning Hebrew truly can be a labor of love.

Labor and love. Each is necessary for truly understanding the Christian scriptures. In this book you will find the presence of both. The work Stephen Ng has put into this text, and the creativity that can be found on every page, reveals the considerable skill he has developed with Hebrew in an extremely short period of time. But it also reveals a passion for knowing God through the Bible, and for encouraging others to learn to read it in Hebrew, that is a rare thing indeed. I hope, then, that you find this book to be both effective and joyful as you take your first steps. The ideas for learning the letters and vowels of Hebrew are unusual but sound, and will help them stick in your memory better than any old fashioned textbook ever could. The overview of Hebrew grammar is brisk, but gets to the heart of what matters and leaves the less-important details to a later step of study, which is an excellent strategy. The vocabulary chosen for study will give you a good beginning, and help you discover that you really can do it, and really can get reading! And the suggestions for further study, both electronic tools and paper, will help you take the energy and excitement you have built through this book and carry them forward into a deeper dialogue with the scriptural texts.

May you come to know God more deeply! May His Holy Spirit fill your heart with delight and joy as you read His Word. And may the Word of God, Christ Jesus Himself, as He speaks in your mouth, taste as sweet as honey.

Ezekiel 3:3

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בֶּן־אָדָם בְּטֹנֶךָ תֹאכֵל וּמַעֲיֵךְ תִּמְלֹא אֶת הַמִּגְלָה הַזֹּאת
אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן אֵלֶיךָ וְאָכְלָה וְתָהִי בְּפִי כְדֶבֶשׁ לְמַתּוֹק :

Rev. Aaron Decker
Visiting Lecturer in Old Testament
Semnari Theoloji Malaysia
November 2019

Preface

I see God calling to His children everywhere to learn the two original languages of the Bible - biblical Hebrew and common (*koine*) Greek.

There is nothing more beautiful than to read the Old Testament as it was written in Hebrew. It is not a language intended for theologians but for ordinary people like you and I.

It helps us to understand God's word in the context in which it was written. That's why there is resurgence of the Hebrew language around the world.

Even in my case, the passion took me by surprise in May 2019 when I had a sudden urge to learn biblical Hebrew. Within just four months, I was able to read the Old Testament in Hebrew.

For most people, I did it in record time but through this simple book, I want to share how I managed to pick up Hebrew within such a short stint. That means you, too, can learn Hebrew without much difficulty.

This book is also for children and youths. Start them young! Learning along with me are my 8-year-old daughter Alyson and 11-year-old son Shaun. This means even your children can pick up the language if you start them young. Indeed, this book is also designed for them. The scheme of learning Hebrew in this book is straightforward: learn the consonants, add the vowels (or the *niqquods*) and you will get the syllables. Combine a few syllables, you will get a word. Arrange the words, you will get the full sentence.

Learning to read the Hebrew Bible is not difficult. Reading and understanding the text is a lifelong journey.

I wish to thank Rev Aaron Decker for checking through the contents and my long-time brother-in-Christ Vincent Yeoh for proofreading.

Stephen Ng

23 September 2019

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בִּרְאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ :
וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֵּהוֹ וּבְהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ
עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
מְרַחֶכֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם :
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי־
אוֹר :

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב
וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין
הַחֹשֶׁךְ :

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אוֹר יוֹם
וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב
וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד :

What on Earth is that?

THE TEXT JUST before this page is taken from Genesis 1: 1-5.

What on earth is that? Bean sprouts! I almost blurted out when I first peeped into the Hebrew Bible on my phone.

When I first started learning biblical Hebrew on my own, I had no idea how to even start. The characters certainly looked like bean sprouts to me.

So, if you feel that too, do not be alarmed! I know exactly how you are feeling now! But by the end of this book, you should be able to read the Hebrew Bible.

To be able to read the Hebrew text, you need to go back to the basics: learn the Alphabet. English has 26 letters from A to Z but Hebrew has only 22 consonants. In one week, you should be able to learn all 22 consonants if you do four or five a day!

The alphabet is the basic building blocks for the language. With the twenty-two consonants and the vowels, words are constructed and you put them together to form sentences.

So, what's so difficult about Hebrew?

Before going to the next page, scan the QR code below and listen to this song on Youtube. Enjoy!



Interlude

Additional Aids for Learning Hebrew for Children. Scan the QR codes using your mobile phone. If you do not have the scanner, download 'QR code scanner' on your phone



AlephBeth Rap



AlephBeth Song



*AlephBeth Song
by KobiSnir*



*Sesame Street:
Learning
AlephBeth*



*Sesame Street:
Learning
Numbers*



*Sesame Street
on Mitzvah*

The First Four Letters

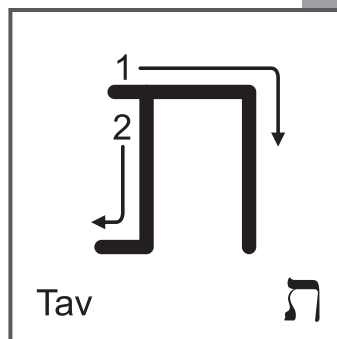
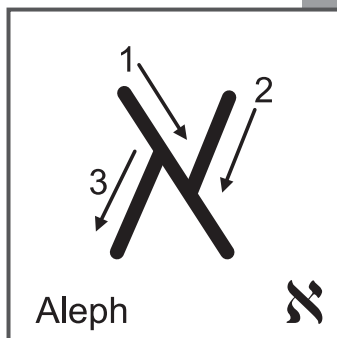
THE *ALEF* OR *Aleph* א is the first Hebrew alphabet, but it is not equivalent to the vowel 'a' in the English alphabet. That's because in Hebrew, there are no vowels like our a-e-i-o-u. They only have 22 consonants.

At first glance, א looks like a capital N but it is written more like an X. א does not lend a sound to the syllable. It is like the silent 'h' in the English word 'hour', where the 'h' is a silent letter. That's why they call the א consonant a guttural (or silent) letter. It has lost its voice.

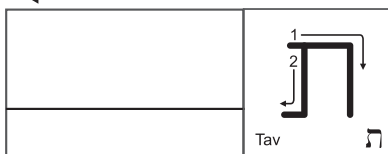
The last letter is *Tau* or *Tav* ט. Therefore, when Elohim¹ said, "I am the א and the ט, He is saying, 'I am the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.'"

In this book, I will use the two different fonts: the block form to help you with your writing and the fanciful Accordance font in the rest of the book.

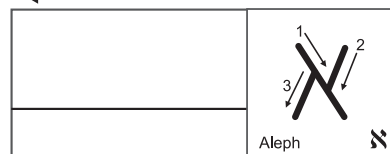
Remember, Hebrew is written from right to left. So, start orientating yourself writing from right to left. This is how you write *Aleph* and *Tav*.



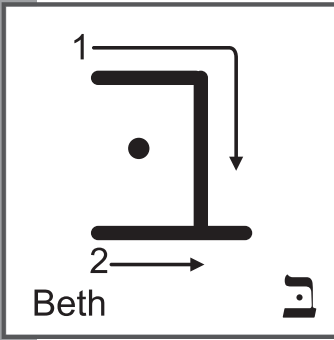
← from right to left.



← from right to left.

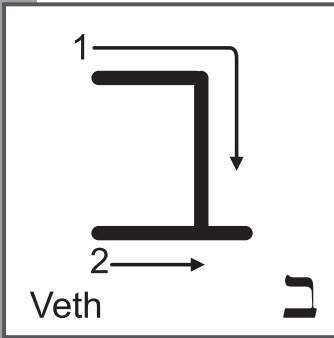


¹ Translated as 'God' in the English language

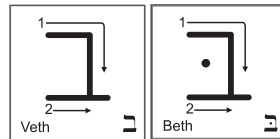


ב is the second letter of the alphabet. It is known as *Beth*. It gives the sound like that of the 'b' in English, as in 'ball'.

Beth ב also has a cousin sister by the name of *Veth*, ב but she does not have a mole on her face. In Hebrew, the little dot • is called the *dagesh*. Once, ב gets her *dagesh* removed, she looks like her cousin sister, ב.



Veth lends the 'v' sound to the syllable as in the word 'have.' This is how you write the two sister letters ב and ב.




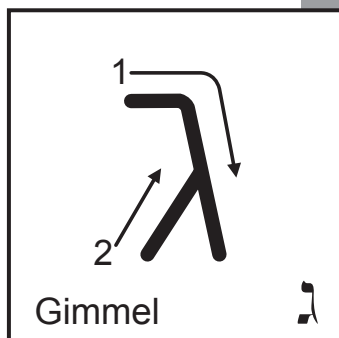
Now, if you put *Aleph* א and *Beth's* cousin sister, *Veth* ב together, you have the word for Father. Elohim is our Father.





If you are still wondering how to pronounce this word, it's as simple as saying 'Av' like the way you pronounce the word 'avenue'. A brilliant combination of two simple characters – א and ב – and we have Elohim as our Father!

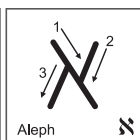
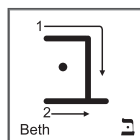
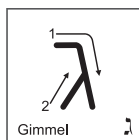
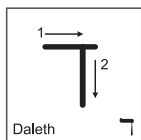
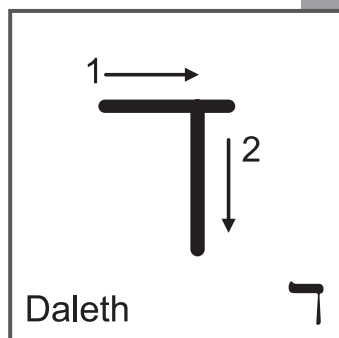
The third letter of the Hebrew alphabet is not a 'C' but a giraffe-like character with two legs and a long neck. Because in Israel


 there are no giraffes, they say it looks more like a camel. Her name is *Gimmel*. It lends the sound of a 'g' to the syllable.



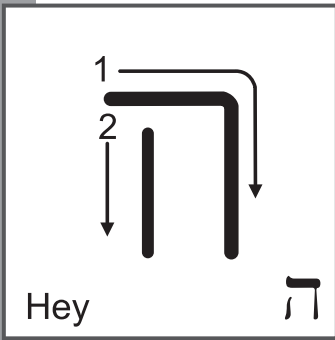
After *Gimmel* comes the fourth letter, *Daleth* . *Daleth* gives the sound of the letter, 'd'.

Doesn't our  look like a dressing table seen from the side? Now, you have learned the first four letters of the alphabet. Can you start practising to write these four letters?



 would be happy to see that you are serious about learning the language. After all, He used it to put together the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Second Set



IF YOU ONLY spend 10 minutes every day to practise writing four letters of the Hebrew alphabet, you would have

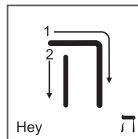
finished learning all 22 consonants in just less than one week!

I cannot take the excuse of people who say that they cannot even spend 10 minutes a day when Elohim has given each of us 24 hours in a day. He does not shortchange us even by one second!

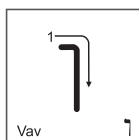
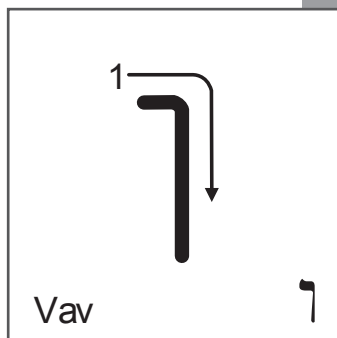
So, *Hey* ה, let's press on. ה has an opened mouth to shout, הַלְלוּ יְהוָה (Hallelujah!)." This looks very much like the last letter *Tav* ט which has a foot that looks stylish. ה doesn't have a foot to stand on. *Hey*, don't trip!

That's how you can differentiate the two characters. ה has the sound of a 'h' consonant, while ט has a 't' sound to it.

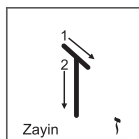
Does it sink in now? Start writing it before you forget:

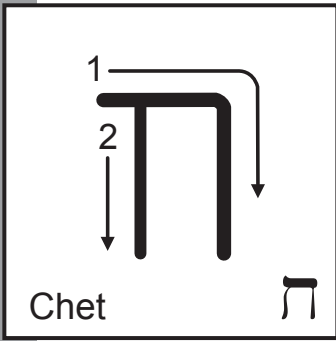


Vav ך is also sometimes known as 'wau'. It is pronounced as a 'w' with 'au' sound formed using the rounded lips. It works like the English letter 'w'. So, before you practise writing the alphabet, say, "Wow! This is so easy to write. It looks like a beansprout."



Next, with just two strokes, I can write *Zayin* ז which has the sound of a 'z'. From the side, it looks like a soldier who is standing at attention and saluting to his general. When the trumpet is blown, ז starts marching forward like a brave soldier. That's *Zayin*. Number plates for military vehicles often begin with a 'Z'.

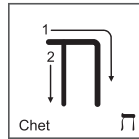




Next, we have the eighth letter, ח - the *Chet* or *Het*. It makes the sound 'ch'. I remember the musician Johann Sebastian Bach, whose name has an ending that sounds like a 'ch'.

ח looks like the other two letters that we have learned, but it does not have the opened mouth like the *Hey* ה or the stylish foot like the *Tav* ט.

This is how I write it:

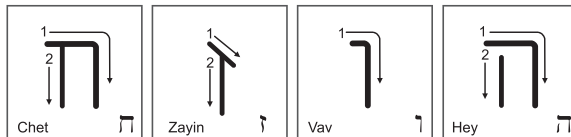


Take a break now. Have a drink before you continue.

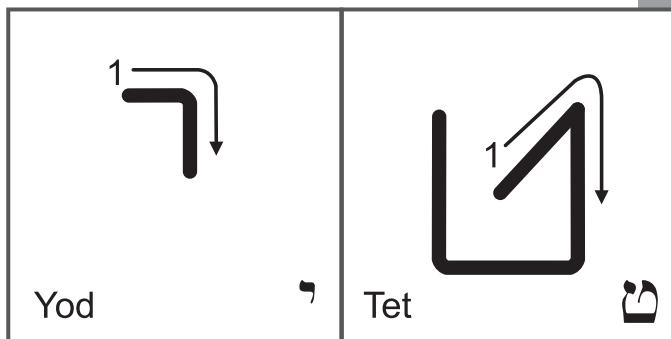
Now, if I put all three letters together, I can differentiate them one from another.

ט	ח	ה
<i>Tav</i>	<i>Chet / Ket / Het</i>	<i>Hey</i>

Now, take a piece of paper and start to practise writing the four letters:

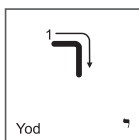
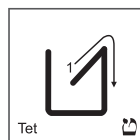


9th & 10th Letters



YOU ARE NEARLY halfway to the finishing line. Elohim has never given up on you, so do you want to give up Hebrew now?

If you think Hebrew is difficult, let me tell you that even kindergarten children can make the sound 'tet-tet-tet.' Can you try it? This is how you write the letter *Tet*, ט in Hebrew.



Yod or *Yud* י is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It works like the 'y' consonant. When Jesus said in Aramaic (Matthew 5:18), and later translated into

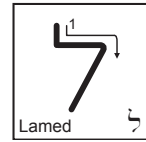
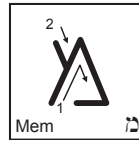
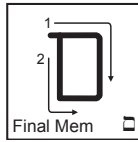
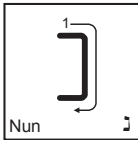
Greek as *Iota*, He was using the letter י to explain that even the smallest detail in God's Word will be fulfilled. Nothing, not even the letter י, escapes His notice.

That is why, when the scribes copied the manuscript, not even the י goes missing in the process. So, you should at least learn to write the י.

Take a break now. Have a cup of coffee. Learning a language can be fun and rewarding.



K, L, M, N



AFTER YOU HAVE reached the tenth letter נ, you should remember we now have four letters that are very close to the English alphabet – the K, L, M and N.

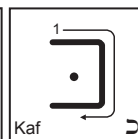
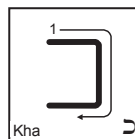
כ is pronounced as *Kaf* or sometimes, *Kap*. Now, do you remember our letter *Beth* ב which has a cousin sister *Veth* without the *dagesh* mole ב?

Kaf כ also has a cousin sister without the *dagesh*, known as *Khaf* or *Kha*. It is written as כּ.






The easiest way to remember this is: the letter *Kaf* כ or *Beth* ב has a masculine sound to it, while the *khaf* or *Kha* כּ and בּ *Veth* has a more feminine sound to it. For those who know a bit of the Thai language, it's like saying, "How are you?" in Thai:

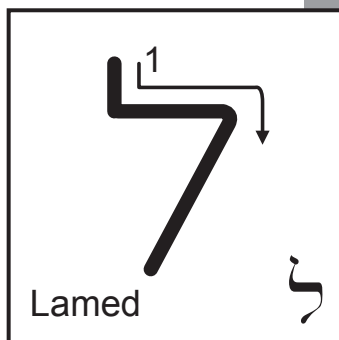
- "Kup Kun Kap" to a male person; and
- "Kup Kun Kha" (with a lighter sound 'kha') to a female person.



Now start practise writing כ and כּ:

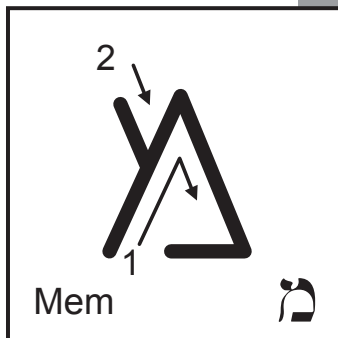




You Can't Read Hebrew?

After that, lightning strikes the 'L' and we have the  *Lamed*. Combined with the *Aleph* , you now have  (*Al* or *El*, another name of God). Kuala Lumpur is KL, in short, and I just write, . Now, practise writing :




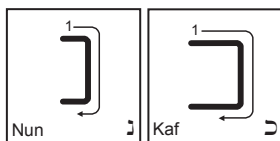
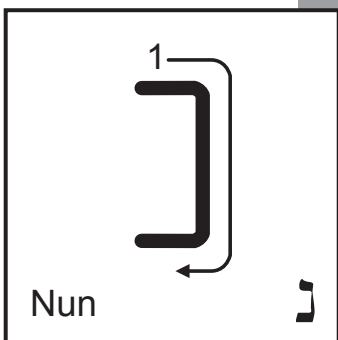
The next letter is . This is equivalent to the 'm' letter in English. Here, I want to introduce to you a Hebrew word that is pronounced, '*me-ra-khe-fet*' (). It is used in Genesis 1:2 to describe how the Spirit of Elohim was hovering above the waters. This word has the *Mem* letter. Can you recognise it?



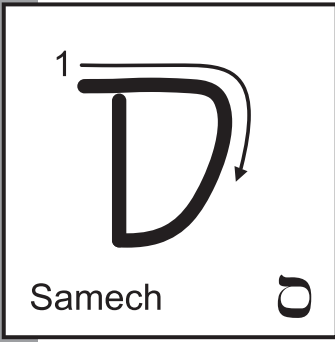
Finally, we have arrived at noon, . Is it 12 noon now?  has the sound of an 'n' consonant. It is pronounced as *Nun* with the emphasis on the u-vowel or simply 'noon'.



This is how you write . It looks like the handle of a door. Try to write both these letters.

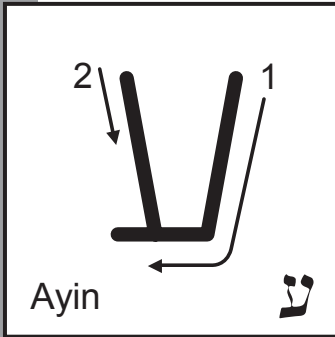


From Samech to Tsade



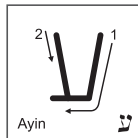
TO SPELL THE word Mount Sinai,
I need a *Samech* ס.

The ס is equivalent to the 's' consonant in the English alphabet. If I want to spell the city of Sodom and the pool of Siloam, I will need the ס. So, I better learn how to write *Samech* many times until I can close both eyes and write it confidently.

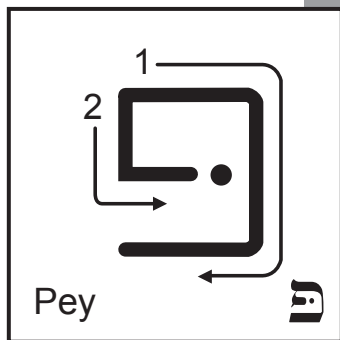


The name *Ayin* ע sounds like the name of the Chinese girl-next-door. The Chinese like to call people by their last names with the prefix *Ah*. So, if the girl next door is Lee Su Yin, I can probably just call her *Ah Yin* in short. A Singaporean friend of mine, however, prefers to remember it as the invisible eyes in the letter Y.

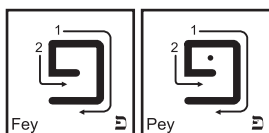
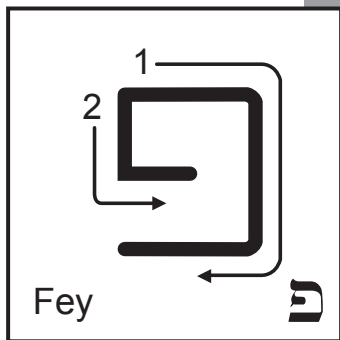
I like to say ע has lost her voice because ע works a bit like the *Aleph* א. Both are silent (or guttural) letters. Before you go on, try writing *Ayin* ע:



When it comes to the letter פּ, I have a problem to 'pay' you. The פּ has a *dagesh* 'mole' in it, so I pronounce it as *Pey*. It works like a 'p'.

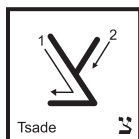
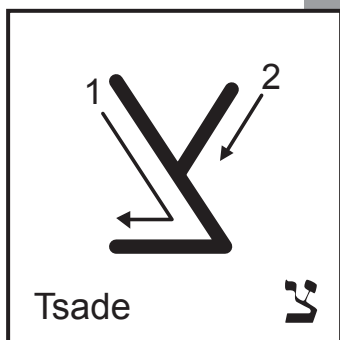


But, פ also has a cousin sister פּ which does not have the *dagesh* and it is pronounced with a feminine sound, *Fey*. She sounds more like the consonant 'f' (as in fellowship or Felicia).

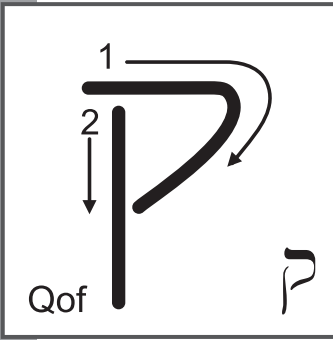


The Hebrew word for 'righteousness' is צדק (Tzadiq). It uses the letter *Tsade* צ which comes with the 'tz' sound. That's why Jewish family names have spellings like *Kaitzer* קייצער.

Now, can you try to write צ:



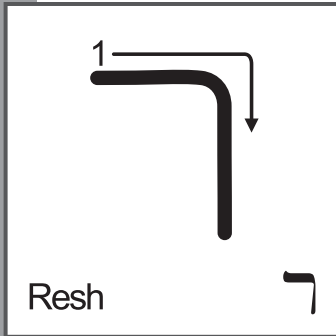
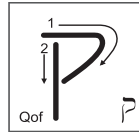
Q, R, Sh & T



WE ARE COMING to the finishing line of the Alphabet race.

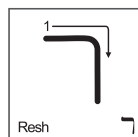
ק looks like a 'p' in the English alphabet. But, wait a minute, Hebrew does not always have to follow the English alphabet. After all, Hebrew predates the English language.

ק is Qof in the Hebrew alphabet. It works like the 'Q' in English. If you can write Hebrew from right to left, ק is the mirror image of q, no? A couple of other consonants and vowels in Hebrew are also mirror images of the English equivalents. I will show you more later but for now, learn to write ק first:

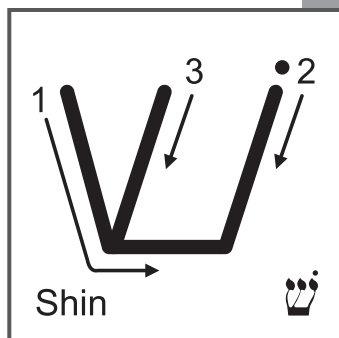


Resh ר is another good example of the mirror image of the letter 'r' in the English alphabet. If I want to spell Rachel רַחֵל, I have to learn to write the letter

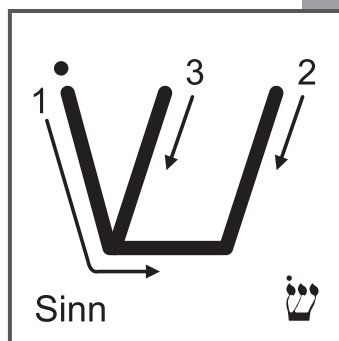
ר. It works like the English alphabet, 'r'.



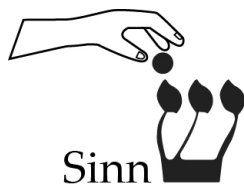
Shin שׁ is the equivalent of 'Sh'. It has the other form, pronounced as *Sinn* שׂ. With just a dot, I can change a *Shin* שׁ to a *Sinn* שׂ.



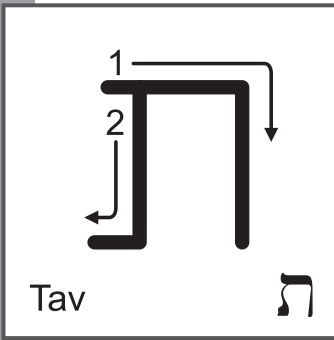
Imagine that I am standing on the left side of שׂ. As I have to stretch my arm very far to reach the little table tennis ball, I have to prolong the sound, 'S-H-I-N' (stretch as long as you can) until I can reach it.



When the ball is nearer to me, I just have to say a short 'S-I-N-N' and I can reach the ball. That's how I remember the difference between שׁ and שׂ.

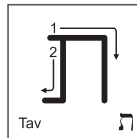


While שׁ is 'sh', שׂ works more like the equivalent of the consonant 's' in English.



The last letter is *Tav* ט. God said, I am the **8** and the ט. We already learnt this on page 3. But you won't regret if you

practise writing both letters again because God feels they are important enough to use when describing Himself as the Beginning and the End.



Within just a short span of time, you have successfully learned the 22 consonants of the Hebrew alphabet! There is no magic in this but with some fun and a passion to want to learn the language, you can easily embark on your journey to read the Hebrew Bible.

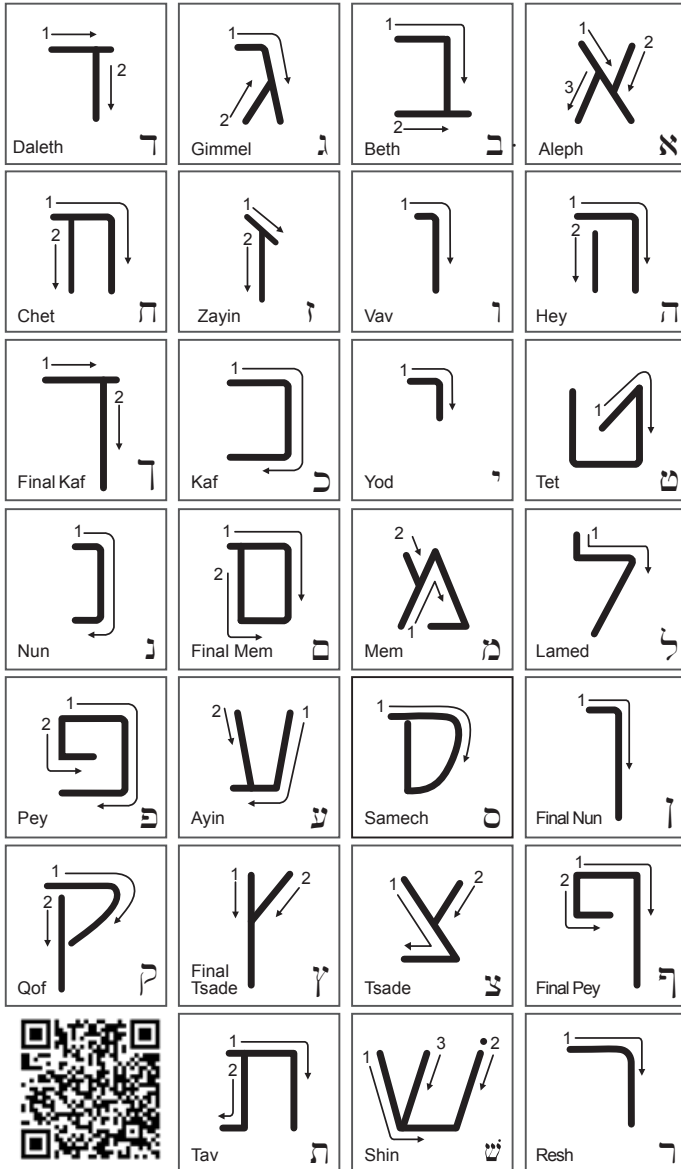
A Word of Motivation

Incidentally, did you know that Psalm 119 has 176 verses, and every eight verses begin with one letter of the Hebrew alphabet? If you multiply the 22 consonants with eight verses each, you get 176 verses. Somehow, we lost the beauty of the alphabetic acrostics in Hebrew poetry when the Bible was translated into English. Psalm 119 shows how God organises His word beautifully as mnemonics for those who need to recite and remember it. Isn't that amazing?

Psalm 119 verses	Begins with the letter	Psalm 119 verses	Begins with the letter
1-8	א	89-96	ל
9-16	ב	97-104	מ
17-24	ג	105-112	נ
25-32	ד	113-120	ס
33-40	ה	121-128	ע
41-48	ו	129-136	פ
49-56	ז	137-144	צ
57-64	ח	145-152	ק
65-72	ט	153-160	ר
73-80	י	161-168	ש
81-88	כ	169-176	ת

Before we go to the *Sofits*, try to practise writing the Hebrew alphabet once again. Here is another good song for those who can sing along (scan the QR code below using your mobile phone):

Handy Hebrew block font writing guide



Scan the QR code to
listen to the alphabet song

The Sofits

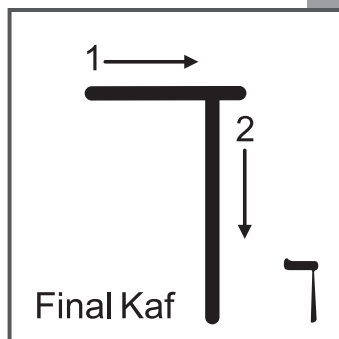
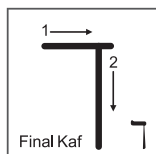
THE *SOFITS* ARE not soft; rather, they are letters of the alphabet that are at the end of a word.

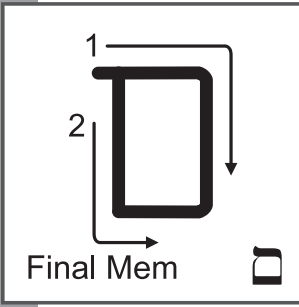
There are five consonants which have a final form of the letter. This is very common with the Semitic languages.

Only five consonants have the *Sofits*. They are also known as the *Kaf sofif* (or final *Kaf*) and so on. In four cases, it's the same character but written with a longer tail. They are:

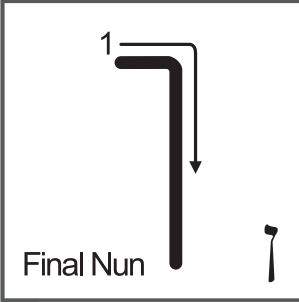
Final <i>Kaf</i>	ך	כ	<i>Kaf</i>
Final <i>Mem</i>	ם	מ	<i>Mem</i>
Final <i>Nun</i>	ן	נ	<i>Nun</i>
Final <i>Pey</i>	ף	פ	<i>Pey</i>
Final <i>Tsade</i>	ץ	צ	<i>Tsade</i>

The *Kaf sofif* ך is written like the handsome dalet ך (which looks like a dressing table) but it has a slightly longer tail.

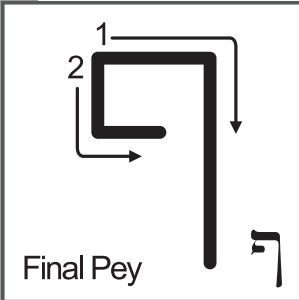




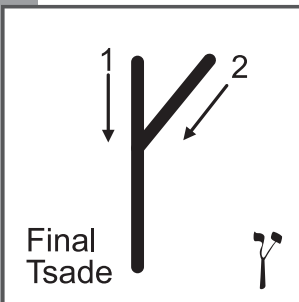
The *Mem sofit* ם is like a box.



Nun נ is slightly straightened to form a tail ך to become the *Nun sofit*.



פ is straightened to form its own tail to become the *Pey sofit* ף.



Tsade צ also has its final form ץ.

When 'tz' is somewhere in the beginning or the middle of a Hebrew word, for example, *Kaitzer* (ק״צ״ר), it appears as צ. When it is at the end of the Hebrew word for Earth (אֶרֶץ), it is written as ץ.

That's all about the final forms or the *sofits* of our five consonants. It's time for you to give yourself a pat on the back as you have finished the first mile in your marathon. Take a rest. Enjoy some fruits.

Benefits of Learning Hebrew

SO FAR, YOU HAVE learned the 22 consonants of the Hebrew alphabet. Before we proceed to learn the vowels, let's look at why we want to learn Hebrew.

Reason No 1: Connecting with God

The only way for us to "connect" with any people group or tribe is to first learn their language. Cross-cultural missionaries spend the first one or two years of their lives in the mission field learning the language. Similarly, for us to connect with God and understand His heartbeat, we should learn the languages that He chose to use when He communicated His Word. Hebrew is what He used for the Old Testament.

Reason No 2: It Enriches Your Brain

In ancient Hebrew, only the consonants were used to form words. Familiarity with the words helped the ancient readers to recognise the words. For example, if I write, 'FTBLL' without the vowels, most people would immediately recognise it as football.

Therefore, learning Hebrew helps to strengthen our memory and the power of recognition of words. This is a good reason why old people should all the more learn Hebrew.

Reason No 3: Activate the Amygdala

A research study has shown that we can prevent diseases of old age such as



Scan this QR code to see
brief documentary on the
activation of the Amygdala.

Alzheimer's or Dementia by actively learning a new language. Learning something new like Hebrew will help to activate the amygdala in the brain.

The amygdala was active when we were children. People who do mundane jobs will end up suffering from Alzheimer's or Dementia because their amygdala becomes inactive. Amygdala is what helps to create the neural connections in the brain.

Reason No 4: Activate Both Sides of the Brain

Dr Edlin Abraham, a local Hebrew teacher who has been teaching biblical Hebrew for more than 30 years, in his book, "Hebrew – Language of the Old Testament", outlines some of the benefits (which I summarise):

- Most of us are right-handed; therefore, we only use the left side of our brain. Because Hebrew is written from right to left, learning to read and write in Hebrew will help us develop a different set of motor skills over time.
- Because Hebrew is foreign to many of us, our memory will be strengthened gradually. This explains why I am able to remember so many Hebrew words within a short period of time.
- Hebrew is a language where its logic creates new thought patterns. Abraham claims that 46% of the best lawyers are Jewish.

Reason No 5: Hebrew text is full of meanings

I am not talking about mysticism or when the rabbis try to theologise over one word. I am talking about the meaning behind the names of people, places and the beauty of the poetic Hebrew especially when it comes to the Psalms.

There are so many answers one can get from reading the Bible in the Hebrew text. For example, we will answer in a later chapter the question whether God spoke to the Israelites as individuals or as a nation when He gave them the Ten Commandments.

Like most people, I, too, started at Ground Zero. I could never imagine how I was able to pick up so many words to add to my vocabulary.

I will show you how to go about learning to read the Hebrew Bible and build your vocabulary in the process.

Interlude

Relax, scan the QR codes and enjoy the music.



*Baruch HaBa
Beshem Adonai*



Shir Ahava



*Ave-nu
(Our Father)*



Adon Hakavod



Ma Navu



Adonai Ori

The *Niqquods*: What's that?

SOMETHING ABOUT THE vowels before we learn to form syllables which come together to make up words.

Why the *Niqquods*?

The vowels in Hebrew are known as the *niqquods*. Because over the past 2000 years, Jews were scattered all over the world, most of them had lost their mother tongue. As the ancient Hebrew manuscripts were mainly composed of only the consonants and their *sofits*, there was a need to preserve the correct pronunciation of the Hebrew words

We have seen that the consonantal word FTBLL only comprises five consonants. Unless we see the context in which the word is used, we cannot figure out what the word means or how it is pronounced.

- W LK T PLY FTBLL.
- THS BTTL S MD F PLYCRBNT.

In the first sentence, we can figure out the consonantal word PLY is 'play' and the sentence would read: 'We like to play football.'

But, we would have some difficulty figuring out that PLY can also mean 'poly' in the second sentence, unless we already have some background knowledge of the word 'polycarbonate'. What more if we have to figure out the whole sentence!

Jews who had forgotten their mother tongue needed the vowels to help them to read the Hebrew text. This is why in the 9th or 10th century, the Masoretic Jewish scholars created the *niqquods* or the Jewish system of vowels.

The *niqquds* were like the crutches people have to use when they cannot walk.

When the scribes copied the biblical manuscripts, they had to preserve every word. The *Niqquod* system is, therefore, a good compromise.

By putting the pointings (dots and dashes), the consonantal words as they appear in the ancient Hebrew text would remain untouched, yet the ordinary Jews would be able to figure out how to pronounce the words with the help of the vowel system.

Suddenly, with the vowel system, these two sentences above have become more readable:

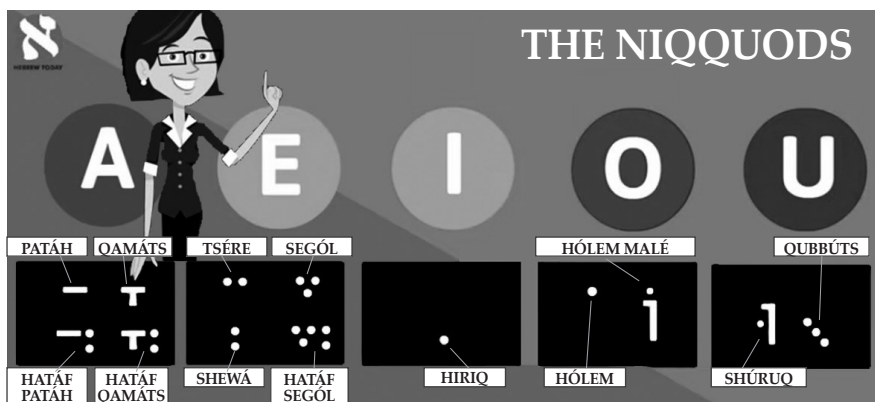
- WE LIKE TO PLAY FOOTBALL.
- THIS BOTTLE IS MADE OF POLYCARBONATE.

The Mnemonics for the *Niqquods*?

SINCE THIS BOOK is for people with zero knowledge of Hebrew, I will use mnemonics to help you remember the *niqquods*.

This has been tested with even children as young as eight years old. If it is so simple that they can understand it, you too need not struggle with the *niqquods*.

Here is how I learned the *niqquods* after struggling with them for a couple of weeks:



To learn a language, one has to be a child again. I love one Youtube video produced for children which teaches them how the *niqquods* function.

However, I have also created the mnemonics to help you recognise immediately and remember the *niqquods* for life.

First, observe how the *niqquods* are all grouped together according to the vowels that they represent. Each *niqquod* within the grouping represents a different intonation.



For example, the *patáh* has a short vowel 'a' while the *qamáts* has a long vowel 'a.' But can we remember all these *niqquods*?

Part One

Here is how:

- 1) The a-vowel goes with the ones with the dashes.
Even the *hatáf patáh* or the *hatáf qamáts* represent the a-vowel because they have a dash. All other vowels are represented by the dots. So, as long as you see a dash, you know it is the a-vowel. Get it?
- 2) The e-vowels are the ones with two or more dots. So, if you see any *niqquod* that has two or more dots, it is almost certain to be an e-vowel.
- 3) Vowels 'i', 'o' and 'u' have only one dot each.
Remember the acronym which we are so used to, I-O-U which means 'I owe you'.

Now, look at the position of the dot.

- The i-vowel is a dot at ground level. Isn't this the mirror image of the 'i' in the English alphabet which has its dot on top? We call this one dot the hireq. If I emphasise the 'i' like this, '**h*I*req**', you will remember the hireq is the i-vowel.
- Now, imagine you are picking up a small tennis ball from the ground represented by the dot in the hireq. Say, 'I' as you throw the tennis ball up as high as you can. Once it reaches the top, say 'o' (the 'o' vowel or the '**h*O*lem**') until the ball lands on someone's hand.
- When it lands on his hand, end with an abrupt 'u'. This is the **sh*U*ruq** and it gives the sound of the u-vowel.

In summary, you have one dot for each of the i-o-u vowels. As you toss the ball up, say 'I', then switch to saying 'O' until the ball lands on someone's hand and you end with 'U'. So, you have I-O-U. Simple, right?

- 4) The u-vowel has the other exception which has three dots. This is the **q*U*bbutz** which looks like a ball bouncing down the staircase.

Now, pat yourself on the shoulder! Within such a short time, you have already learned the groupings of each niqquod. Was it that difficult?

Part Two

- 5) Now, how do you remember the names of each vowel?

.....
 : *Patáh* is a short 'a' vowel :
 : *Qamáts* is a long 'ā' vowel :
 : It takes a shorter time to draw a :
 : dash compared to a qamáts which :
 : has to take longer time to draw two :
 : strokes. This is how I differentiate :
 : the two 'a' vowels. :
 :

- To begin with, we have the vowel 'a'. It is easy to remember the names if you use this mnemonics:
- **p*A*táh** is like a stick, which you can easily break into a few smaller sticks.
- **q*A*máts** sounds like comets, right? I sometimes spell it as qamets so that we can easily remember it as comets with a tail. Doesn't the qamáts look like it has a tail, much like Halley Comet's tail?
- The e-vowels are:
 - **ts*E*re**: Here, we have two horizontal dots.
 - **sh*E*wa**: Here, we have two vertical dots.
 - **s*E*gol**: This is the one with three dots in an inverted triangular shape.

For the three vowels, 'i', 'o' and 'u', which are represented by one dot, we just have to remember the following mnemonics.

6) The 'I-O-U' vowels:

- **h*I*req**: We already know that the dot at the bottom gives the i-vowel sound; therefore, it is easy to remember it as the h*I*req.
- **h*O*lem**: The dot at the top is the o-vowel; hence, we call it the h*O*lem.
- **sh*U*ruq**: This is the dot represented by the baseball that lands on the mid-shelf of a Hebrew alphabet. The sh*U*ruq represents the long û-vowel.

I always remember this as a boy holding the ball.

Finally, there is the exception:

- **q*U*bbutz**: The qubbutz or some call it the gibbutz which represents the short u-vowel.

Of course, there are no perfect rules that will help you remember the *niqquds* but with this mnemonic that I created, many people find it easier to remember the *niqquds*.

For beginners, you should at least remember Part One. So long as you remember the mnemonics for the a-e-i-o-u vowels, you can begin reading your Hebrew Bible.

You can skip the next two chapters for now. In fact, Modern Hebrew treats the *niqquds* as the same class; hence, they do not differentiate between the long and the short vowels.

You can come back to pages 31 to 36 when you are ready to learn how to pronounce the Hebrew words correctly.

Learning the Phonetics

ONCE YOU HAVE learned the 22 consonants and the *niqquds*, you are one step closer to reading the Hebrew Bible.

Although you should be able to figure out how to read the Hebrew Bible, it is good to understand the various intonation for the *niqquds* so that you are able to pronounce each word correctly.

Linguists have designed a system of markings on each letter of the English alphabet to help us know the different way the vowel is pronounced. Try to familiarise yourself with the markings.

a	e	i	o	u	Intonation
ă	ě	-	ǒ	-	Reduced vowel
a	e	i	o	u	Short vowel
ā	ē	-	ō	-	Long Vowel
āh	ēh	î	ô	û	Long Vowel or <i>Mater Lectionis</i>

It is important that you recognise each of the above vowel and learn to pronounce each vowel based on its intonation.

- a small curve upwards on top of the vowel **ă** represents a reduced vowel. Think of this small curve as an incomplete circle.
- a short straight line above the vowel letter **ā** makes it a long vowel. As you draw the straight line, stretch your pronunciation of the a-vowel as long as possible (hence, the long vowel).

- a small arrow head sitting above the vowels **î**, **ô** and **û** represent what we call the long vowel or the *Mater Lectionis* for i-, o- and u-vowels. Both the a- and e-vowels are accompanied with a 'h' sound to it.
- without any markings, the vowel is a short vowel (examples: a, e, i, o, u).


You may be asking: Why is it important to learn the different intonation? Take the example of the a-vowel. We now know that this vowel can be pronounced as a reduced vowel *ă*, short a, or the long vowel *ā*.

Now, let's look at the example of my son's name, Shaun. The a-vowel used here is the short a-vowel, but supposing if I were to spell his name as Shāun. Instead of pronouncing it with the short a-vowel, I would have to stretch the a-vowel (hence, long a-vowel). The name Shāun with a long a-vowel would sound very awkward: "Sh [long ā]-Un". If we do not differentiate the short from the long a-vowel, you see now that even in the English language, a word can mean different things based on a different intonation.

Only after you have done this phonetic exercise will you be able to follow through the different *niqquds* in biblical Hebrew.





The Different Intonation in Hebrew

NOW, APPLY THIS knowledge you have learnt from the previous chapter in Hebrew for the equivalent of each vowel. The tables below may appear complicated but they basically point to a different intonation for each *Niqquod*. That's all!

 In the tables below, this circle represents a Hebrew character

a-vowels

As you do this, you may want to recap that in Hebrew, the a-vowel is the *Niqquod* that has at least one dash.

Syllable	Name of vowel	Transliteration	Pronunciation of the a-vowel
	<i>hatáf patáh</i>	ă	Reduced a-vowel Like the a-vowel in the word, about, after or arch
	<i>patáh</i>	a	Short a-vowel Like the a-vowel in the words, at, pan, hat, mat, rag, mad
	<i>qamáts</i>	ā	Long a-vowel Like the a-vowel in the words, ate, pane, hate, mate, rage, made
	<i>qamáts malé</i>	āh	Long a-vowel: <i>Mater Lectionis</i>

e-vowels

To recap, the *niqquods* with two or more dots are equivalent to the e-vowel. There are three major *niqquods* that represent the e-vowel.

- *segól* (short vowel, pronounced as [ɛ] as in “pet”),
- *tsére* (long vowel which is pronounced [e] as in “May”)
- *shewá* (this can be a vocal or a silent shewá
(see page 61))

Syllable	Name of vowel	Transliteration	Pronunciation of the e-vowel
	<i>hatáf segól</i>	ě	Reduced e-vowel Like the e-vowel in the word: Elohim
	<i>segól</i>	e	Short e-vowel Like the e-vowel in the word: pet
	<i>tsére</i>	ē	Long e-vowel : Plain Like the e-vowel in the word: they
	<i>segól malé</i>	ê	Long e-vowel: <i>Mater Lectionis</i>
		êh	
	<i>tsére malé</i>	ē	
		ēh	
	<i>shewá</i> (or <i>schwa</i>)	ə/--	Very short neutral vowel Either as Vocal or Silent e-vowel. Example of a silent e-vowel: slope.

We have already learned that for the i-o-u vowels, there is only one dot and the position of the dot is what determines whether it is an i-, o-, or u-vowel

i-vowels

Now, for the i-vowel, note that all the i-vowels are pronounced as [i] as in “meet”. There are no reduced i-vowel. The *niqquds* are either the *hiriq* or the *hiriq malé*.

Syllable	Name of vowel	Transliteration	Pronunciation of the i-vowel
	Non-Existent		Reduced i-vowel
◊ ◊	<i>hiriq</i>	i	Short i-vowel Like the i-vowel in the words: hid, kit, sit, rid, fin
	Non-Existent		Long i-vowel
◊ ◊	<i>hiriq malé</i>	î	Long vowel: <i>Mater Lectionis</i> Like the i-vowel in the words: hide, kite, site, ride, fine



o-vowels

For the o-vowel, a different way of pronunciation also exists:

Syllable	Name of vowel	Transliteration	Pronunciation of the o-vowel
◊ ◊	<i>hatáf qamáts</i>	ǒ	Reduced o-vowel
◊ ◊	<i>qamáts qatán</i>	o	Short o-vowel Like the o-vowel in the words: rob, hop, cop, not, slop
◊ ◊	<i>hólem</i>	ō	Long o-vowel Like the o-vowel in the words: robe, hope, cope, note, slope
◊ ◊	<i>hólem malé</i>	ô	Long vowel: <i>Mater Lectionis</i>
◊ ◊		ōh	

u-vowels

The *niqquds* that represent the u-vowel will appear as a short vowel *qubbúts* or a long vowel *shúruq*.













Hebrew	Name of vowel	Transliteration	Pronunciation of the u-vowel
	Non-Existent		Reduced u-vowel
	<i>qubbúts</i>	u	Short u-vowel Like the u-vowel in the words: run, bun, gun
	Non-Existent		Long u-vowel
	<i>shúruq</i>	û	Long Vowel: <i>Mater Lectionis</i> Like the u-vowel in the words: brutal, tutor, you

The Guttural Letters

THE NEXT THING you have to be aware of is that the guttural letters א and ח are the silent letters. Gutturals are made in the back of the mouth, instead of the front. That's make them special. Instead of lending a sound to the syllable like the other consonants, they depend on the *niqquds* for the sound.

Guttural letters are nothing new. In the English language, we also have guttural letters. For example, the 'h' in the word 'honest' is also a guttural letter. You will not be able to hear the 'h' sound in the word 'honest'.

Here are some examples of guttural letters and how the vowels lend them a sound:

 <i>Aleph</i>							
Sound	u	û	o	ô	i	ě, e	ă, a, ā
 <i>Ayin</i>							
Sound	u	û	o	ô	i	ě, e	ă, a, ā

Interlude

Relax, scan the QR codes and enjoy the music.



Aaronic Blessing



*My God will
hear me*



*The Eyes of
the Lord*



*Yeshua
Hamaschiah*



Psalm 150



Shabbath Shalom

Just Counting!

BY NOW, AFTER you have learned the alphabet, you should not feel intimidated looking at the same script that appeared on page X.

Recognising the Consonants

You can do this exercise below. Scan through the Hebrew text slowly from right to left and start counting the number of each consonant:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ :
וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּ
חַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם :
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אוֹר וַיְהי־אוֹר :
וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים
בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ :
וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וּלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה
וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד :

Number of times	Consonant	Number of times	Consonant	Number of times	Consonant
	ב		ב	23	א
	ה		ד		ג
	ח		ז		ו
	כך		י		ט
	נן		מם		ל
	פף		עץ		ס
	ר		ק		צ
			ת		ש

Recognising the *Niqquods*

Find at least five of the following *niqquods*. Tick ✓ in the box beside once you have found five *niqquods*. If there are less than five *niqquods*, just write how many you can find.

	Tick ✓		Tick ✓
<i>qamáts</i>		<i>hireq</i>	
<i>patáh</i>		<i>hólem</i>	
<i>tsére</i>		<i>shúruq</i>	
<i>segól</i>		<i>qubbúts</i>	
<i>shewá</i>			

Word Search

CAN YOU FIND the following Hebrew words for each of the following *niquods* hidden in the box? This exercise will train your eyes to recognise the consonants and the *niquods*.

זְ	חַ	ם	לָ	וּ	חַ	דַּ	לָ	זְ	זַ
לָ	זַ	ךְ	זְ	יֵ	יַ	חַ	שׁ	כַּ	לָ
ךְ	דַּ	קַ	יַ	רַ	רַ	חַ	נֵ	קַ	זַ
סַ	ךְ	דַּ	סַ	ךְ	יַ	דַּ	שׁ	בַּ	עַ
דַּ	נֵ	כַּ	דַּ	חַ	קַ	וַ	רַ	וַ	שׁ
אַ	וַ	שׁ	חַ	זַ	דַּ	זְ	כַּ	ץ	נֵ

הִירֵק hireq

חֹלֶם hólem

שׁוּרוּק shúruq

שְׁוָא shewá

קֻבּוּץ qubbúts

(Hint: They appear from left to right or from top to bottom. To find the words, look for the first letter of the alphabet and work your way through. See answer on page 73)

Interlude

Starting to Read Hebrew



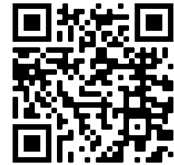
*Hebrew Vowels
by Sigal Zohar*



*Two Hebrew
Vowels*



*Learning to Read
Hebrew Syllables*



*Learning to Read
Hebrew without
Vowels*




*Learning to Read
Genesis 1:1*



*Learning to Type
Hebrew Letters
and Niquods*

Zooming in on the Syllables

a

bă, ba, bā

NOW WE ZOOM in on the syllables. Syllables are made up of consonants and the *niquods*. The consonants and *niquods* are the bricks and mortar in a language.

This is similar in most languages. It is comforting to know that Hebrew works the same way as well. In the chart given below, there are some examples of syllables arranged from long to short vowels.

Can you try to pronounce the syllables?

	u		o		i		e	a
								
Beth								
Sound	bu	bû	bo	bô	bi	bî	ba/--, be, bē	bă, ba, bā
								
Veth								
Sound	vu	vû	vo	vô	vi	vî	va/--, ve, vē	vă, va, vā
								
Gimmel								
Sound	gu	gû	go	gô	gi	gî	ga/--, ge, gē	gă, ga, gā
								
Daleth								
Sound	du	dû	do	dô	di	dî	da/--, de, dē	dă, da, dā

Now, try to see if you are able to read the following syllables from right to left. For all the vowels, I have arranged them from long to short vowel.

	u		o		i	e	a
	הּ	הוּ	הוּ	הוּ	היּ	היהּ	היהּ
Hey							
	פּ	פּוּ	פּוּ	פּוּ	פיּ	פּהּ	פּהּ
Pey							

You can go on with the other consonants to form syllables together with the *niquods*. It is really straightforward.

If *Beth* בּ is a 'b', and you put one dot below which represents the i-vowel, you will get בִּי. The syllable is pronounced as *bi*.

Hey הּ works like the 'h' in the English language, and if you put one dot above it הֵ, the sound of the syllable becomes, *ho*.

If you put three dots below the letter *Pey* פּ, you will get the syllable *pu*. Now, does this all make sense to you?

For more practice, you can also play with the game on this site (http://hebrewverb.hul.huji.ac.il/newtest/run_swf.html) to learn the pronunciation of Hebrew words. You will need to find a browser such as Microsoft Explorer that supports Adobe Flash Player.

Although the words introduced in this website are mainly from Modern Hebrew, this will give you some idea how to read the syllables using Hebrew consonants and the dots and dashes.

Reading Hebrew Words

וְהָאֵרֶץ
Transliteration:
<i>we-ha-a-re-tz</i>

THE TIME HAS finally come for you to read some Hebrew words. You have learned what you need to be able to start reading the Hebrew words.

In most books on learning Hebrew, they use transliteration to help you with pronunciation of words.

However, it is more important to learn the alphabet and read the words syllable-by-syllable than to use any form of transliteration. Therefore, in this book, the transliteration will be avoided, unless it is necessary.

By working your way through the pronunciation using the syllables with the original Hebrew letters, this will help you more than if you start using the transliteration.

This Makes Sense

Each word is made up of syllables. Each syllable, in turn, is made up of a few Hebrew consonants and the *niqquds*. So, once you can recognise the Hebrew letters and the *niqquds*, you should be able to read the Hebrew text.

Put in another way: A word is made up of syllables; therefore, in order to be able to read a word, you just have to break it into syllables to read them one by one.

Look at the word which means 'the earth' and try to recognise the consonants and the *niqquds*. Remember, Hebrew is read from the right.

Consonant	וְ	רְ	אְ	הְ	וּ	וְהָאֶרֶץ
Consonant	<i>Tzade</i>	<i>Resh</i>	<i>Alef</i>	<i>Hey</i>	<i>Wav</i>	
Niqquod		<i>segól</i>	<i>qamáts</i>	<i>qamáts</i>	<i>shewá</i>	<i>we-ha-a-re-tz</i> meaning 'the earth'
Transliteration	<i>tz</i>	<i>re</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>we</i>	

Don't worry about the meaning yet. Now, let's try to see how to pronounce these words:

How do you pronounce this word?	Syllables			Hebrew word
		ם	מְ	מַיִם
	הָ	יְ	הְ	הַיְתָה
		הוּ	תְ	תִהְיוּ
	הוּ	בְ	וּ	וְיָבֹהוּ
	שָׁךְ	חְ	וּ	וְחִשָּׁךְ

Once you know how to pronounce the syllables, you will be able to pronounce the word. This is the start of your journey in reading the Hebrew Bible.

Exercise:

Try to break these words into syllables. The first one has been done for you.

רָשָׁע	הַלְלוּ יְהוָה	חֹזֵן	מֹשֶׁה
לְעוֹלָם	תָּסֵד	תַּחַת	זָכַר

Just Do It!

TO LEARN TO read the Hebrew text, you have to start reading the Hebrew text right away.

It doesn't matter that you do not understand what you read. Soon, you will enrich your vocabulary. This was, after all, how I learned to read the Hebrew Bible.

The more you do this, the faster it will be for you to learn to read the Hebrew Bible. If you wait until you can read confidently the words, you will never do it.

Here are some texts for you to work your way through the Hebrew Bible.

Psalm 136:1-5

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ :
הוֹדוּ לֵאלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ :
הוֹדוּ לְאֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ :
לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדִלוֹת לְבָדּוֹ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ :
לַעֲשֵׂה הַשְׁמַיִם בְּתִבּוּנָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ :

Ruth 1:1-2

וַיְהִי בַיָּמֵי שָׁפֹט הַשְּׁפֹטִים וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ
יִלְדָּא אִישׁ מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה לָגוֹר בְּשָׂדֵי מוֹאָב
הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו :
וְשֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ נָעֲמִי וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי-
בָנָיו מַחֲלֹן וְכִלְיוֹן אֶפְרַתִּים מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה
וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׂדֵי-מוֹאָב וַיְהִי-שָׁם :

Ezekiel 43:1-5

וַיּוֹלֶכְנִי אֶל-הַשָּׁעַר שֶׁעַר אֲשֶׁר פְּנֵה דָרֶךְ
הַקְּדָיִם :
וְהִנֵּה כְבוֹד אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּא מִדָּרֶךְ הַקְּדָיִם
וְקוֹלוֹ פָּקוֹל מִיָּם רַבִּים וְהָאָרֶץ הָאִירָה
מִכְבֹּדוֹ :
וּכְמֵרָאָה הַמֵּרָאָה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי כְּמֵרָאָה
אֲשֶׁר-רָאִיתִי בְּבֹאִי לְשַׁחַת אֶת-הָעִיר וּמֵרָאוֹת
כְּמֵרָאָה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי אֶל-נְהַר-כְּבָר וְאֶפֶל
אֶל-פָּנָי :
וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה בָּא אֶל-הַבַּיִת דָּרֶךְ שֶׁעַר אֲשֶׁר
פָּנּוּ דָּרֶךְ הַקְּדָיִם :
וַתִּשְׁאַנֵּי רוּחַ וַתְּבִיאֵנִי אֶל-הַחֲצַר הַפְּנִימִי
וְהִנֵּה מָלֵא כְבוֹד-יְהוָה הַבַּיִת :

Numbers 6:24-26

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ :
יֵאָר יְהוָה | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ :
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם :

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד :
וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ
וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ :

Psalms 150:1-5

הַלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלוּ-אֵל בְּקִדְשׁוֹ הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרָקִיעַ עֶזוֹ :
הַלְלוּהוּ בַּגְּבוּרֹתָיו הַלְלוּהוּ כְּרֹב גְּדֻלּוֹ :
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתִקְעַ שׁוֹפָר הַלְלוּהוּ בַּנִּבָּל וּכְנֹר :
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתֶף וּמָחֹל הַלְלוּהוּ בַּמִּנִּים וְעֹגָב :
הַלְלוּהוּ בָצֹלָלִי-שְׁמַע הַלְלוּהוּ בָצֹלָלִי תְרוּעָה :
כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תִּהְלֵל יְהוָה הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה :

Interlude

Additional Aids for Learning Biblical Hebrew



*Learning to
Pronounce AlephBeth*



*Introduction to Perfect
Hebrew Pronunciation*



*40 Minutes to
Learning Hebrew*



*Gutturals and
Resh*



*The Hebrew
Vowels*



*Biblical Hebrew
Grammar*

Building Vocabulary

WHEN you were born, you could only cry when you wanted some milk. Most toddlers start to pick up words like 'food' or 'eat' after they learn to say 'Papa' and 'Mama'.

Before long, the child starts to say, "Mama, I want to eat!" Then, she learns to protest, "Mama, I don't like veggies." She picks up new words that she hears the adults saying and sometimes while watching some cartoon movies. She is now able to construct sentences with these new words.

By the time she goes to school, she starts learning new words every day. Before long, she is able to read thick novels, involve in a public debate with her opponents and even write books.

Isn't this amazing? Learning a new language is indeed a journey we take on in life. So, decide today that you will embark on this journey to learn Hebrew.

Build Your Vocabulary

You can start doing your own Hebrew flashcards or get some from the local Christian bookshop.

There are also plenty of vocabulary flashcards available from both *Ankiweb.Net* and *Memrise.com*. The more you go through your flashcards and the more you read the Hebrew Bible, the faster it is for you to build your vocabulary.

When I first started, I could not even read a single word in the Hebrew Bible. Now, when I read the familiar text that I have worked through, I can explain the meaning of most of the words.

Flashcards are very useful to help you build your Hebrew vocabulary. They help us to remember words, especially if the word relates to our daily life. God used the same teaching method to remind the people of Israel of his commandments:

*"You shall write them on the doorposts of your house
and on your gates."*

This same line is repeated twice in the book of Deuteronomy (6:9 and 11:20). It is a cue to the Israelites that they are to constantly remind themselves if they want to learn something.

Borrowed Words

Words are often borrowed from other languages. Those who know Malay, for example, are at an advantage when they want to learn the Hebrew vocabulary.

A lot of Malay words are taken from the Arabic language. Both Hebrew and Arabic belong to the Semitic group of languages.

Here are some examples:

Malay	Meaning	Hebrew	Transliteration
<i>Nabi</i>	Prophet	נָבִיא	<i>Na'vi</i>
<i>Zaman</i>	Time/Era/Epoch	זְמַן	<i>Z'man</i>
<i>Zakar</i>	Male	זָכָר	<i>zakar</i>
<i>Allah</i>	The God (for Muslims) God or gods (for pagan Arabs)	אֱלֹהִים	<i>Al, Elah (Aramaic)</i>
<i>Illahi</i>	God	אֱלֹהֵי	<i>Elahe</i>

In fact, a lot of names in the Malay and Indonesian Bible have their origin in Hebrew.

Examples are given below:

Malay	English	Hebrew	Transliteration
<i>Musa</i>	Moses	מֹשֶׁה	Mo'seh
<i>Ibrahim</i>	Abraham	אַבְרָהָם	<i>Avraham</i>
<i>Ishak</i>	Isaac	יִצְחָק	<i>Yiṣḥāq</i>
<i>Ismail</i>	Ishmael	יִשְׁמָעֵאל	<i>Yishma'el</i>
<i>Yakob</i>	Jacob	יַעֲקֹב	<i>Ya'aqōv</i>
<i>Yusuf</i>	Joseph	יוֹסֵף	<i>Yosef</i>

Interlude

Useful Tools for Learning Biblical Hebrew



AccordanceBible.com



Logos.Com



*Learn Hebrew
Together*



AnimatedHebrew.com



*Israel Institute of
Biblical Studies*



*Learn Biblical
Hebrew with
Sigal Zohar*

Short Phrases to Remember

THERE ARE SOME common short phrases that you can memorise once you are ready.

I will provide some good ones that you can learn and repeat every day as a reminder. Can you now try to work through it?

This is a very common phrase we use to praise the Lord!
Can you recognise the word?

הַלְלוּ יְהוָה

Elohim is often known as the Living God:

אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים

Yeshua Hamashiach or Jesus the Messiah:

ישוע המשיח

This was what Elohim said to Moses when Moses asked Him for His name, "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14):

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

Psalms 136 is a psalm that sings about God and His everlasting (עוֹלָם) lovingkindness (חַסְדּוֹ). Here is a phrase which is repeated 26 times in the whole psalm. Every verse ends with the phrase which is translated as "His lovingkindness is everlasting":

כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

When you want to say, "The Lord bless you and keep you," (as in the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:24-26), you say:

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ

This phrase often appears in the Bible, "And God said":

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים

Sometimes, it appears as, "And the Lord calls out..."

יְקַרְא אֱלֹהִים

The God who is near:

הָאֱלֹהִי מִקְרֹב

Some Peculiarities

EZEKIEL LOOKS AT Robert, wondering why the Englishman cannot make things simple by saying,

"אֲנִי עֶזְקֵאל"

It simply means, "I Ezekiel."

Unlike English, nominal sentences like the above example are common in Hebrew. A nominal sentence in Hebrew is a sentence that does not have an explicit verb. This may sound peculiar to an English speaking person, as a sentence in Hebrew can go without a verb.

Therefore, the English speaker would say, "I am Samuel" but, in Hebrew, it is just, "I Samuel."

In every language, there are peculiarities. Before you proceed to learn further, there are some things that you need to be exposed to. This will help you when you progress in your learning of Biblical Hebrew.

Most Hebrew words are made up of just three consonants. The same root word can appear in different forms in terms of whether it is active or passive and the intensity of the relationship between the parties involved. This is called the *Binyanim*. For now, you do not have to worry about it!

You will learn more as you progress in your Hebrew journey. For now, you can just develop some idea of how the language works.

Plural Nouns

To make a word plural, in English, we put the 's' suffix to the noun. In Hebrew, we add the suffix **ים**-. Here are some examples:

Singular	English	Plural
דֶּרֶךְ	way	דְּרָכִים
סוס	horse	סוּסִים
גוֹי	nations	גּוֹיִם

Gender-Sensitive Nouns

In Hebrew, we differentiate the gender of a noun by just adding a suffix **ה** to the noun.

Male	English	English	Female
סוס	Male horse	Female horse	סוּסָה
אִישׁ	man	woman	אִשָּׁה
מֶלֶךְ	King	Queen	מַלְכָּה

You will also learn that in Hebrew, the possessive pronouns are also gender-sensitive. This is quite different from English. For example, for the word 'foot' (רֶגֶל), when we refer to the second person masculine, in English, we say, 'Your foot.' But in Hebrew, it is simply by adding the suffix **ךָ** to the word רֶגֶלְךָ for a male person, and **ךָ** for a female person.

Your foot (referring to singular masculine)	רֶגֶלְךָ
Your foot (referring to singular feminine)	רֶגְלְךָ

Gender-Sensitive Verbs

I have listed the general rules below. You can determine whether it is a male or a female, and whether it is a singular or plural by looking at the suffixes. An example is also given, with the word 'he kept' or שָׁמַר. What this means is that, in Hebrew, although we have the pronouns, we do not follow the same construction as the English language. For example, when we want to say, "I kept," we do not write אֲנִי שָׁמַר. Instead, we just use one word and one suffix, שָׁמַרְתִּי.

PERFECT/ PAST TENSE (QATAL VERBS)					
SINGULAR			PLURAL		
First Person	I did	שָׁמַרְתִּיXXX	First Person	We did	שָׁמַרְנוּXXX
	I kept	שָׁמַרְתִּי		We kept	שָׁמַרְנוּ
Second Person Masculine	You did	שָׁמַרְתָּXXX	Second Person Masculine	You did	שָׁמַרְתָּXXX
	You kept	שָׁמַרְתָּ		You kept	שָׁמַרְתָּ
Second Person Feminine	You did	שָׁמַרְתְּXXX	Second Person Feminine	You did	שָׁמַרְתְּXXX
	You kept	שָׁמַרְתְּ		You kept	שָׁמַרְתְּ
Third Person Masculine	He did	שָׁמַרXXX	Third Person Masculine	They did	שָׁמַרוּXXX
	He kept	שָׁמַר		They kept	שָׁמַרוּ
Third Person Feminine	She did	שָׁמַרהXXX	Third Person Feminine	They did	שָׁמַרוּXXX
	She kept	שָׁמַרה		They kept	שָׁמַרוּ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aV0pGgZFz-I>

Different Forms of the Verbs

In Hebrew, you just have to change the *niqquds*, add the prefixes (before the word) or the suffixes (after the word) to the same root word. There are, of course, some principles that you will need to follow but for now, it's good to just have a feel.

ב Veth	בּ Beth
ג Gimmel	גּ Gimmel
ד Daleth	דּ Daleth
כ Kaf	כּ Kap
פ Fey	פּ Pey
ת Tav	תּ Tav

The weak and strong *dagesh*

A *dagesh* is a dot right in the middle of the letter. We call these the **beged'kepet**² alphabets, comprising the six letters with the weak *dagesh*.

These are known as the weak *dagesh* because they exist within the letters of the alphabet as just another

form of the letter.

However, there is another type of *dagesh* that we call the strong *dagesh*. This exists in a letter apart from the above examples. What they do is to require the reader to give additional attention to the letter when pronouncing the syllable. When transliterated, this often carries the same letter twice. Here are some examples:

And he spoke	Wayyomer	וַיֹּאמֶר
The great	haggadol	הַגָּדוֹל

²Notice the six letters of the alphabet (**bgdkpt**) that represent the Hebrew letters with a weak *dagesh*.

The Vocal and Silent *Shewá*

The *Shewá* is vocal if it is at the beginning of a word. It lends the e-vowel sound to the syllable. For example,

Be-re-shit	בְּרֵאשִׁית
Ke-bo-a-nah	כְּבֹאֲנָה
Ge-de-rah (name of a city in Joshua 15:36)	גִּדְרָה

The *Shewá* is silent if it is at the closing of a syllable. It does not give an e-vowel sound to the syllable.

Matz-a	מַצָּה
Way-yish-lah	וַיִּשְׁלַח
Tiq-wah	תִּקְוָה

If there are two *Shewá* next to each other, the first one is a silent *Shewá* followed by a vocal *Shewá*.

We-nis-me-hah	וְנִשְׁמְחָה
Yar-ke-te	יִרְכְּתִי

Adjective Follows the Pattern of the Noun

In Hebrew, the adjective follows the pattern of the noun. For example, if we add a ך to the noun to show its femininity, we have to also add the ך to the adjective that describes the noun.

For example, we want to say, "The man is big," we write it as:

אִישׁ הַגָּדוֹל

Now, supposing if we want to say, "The woman is big", we would have to add a ך to the adjective; hence, it will be:

אִשָּׁה הַגָּדוֹלָה

If we want to use an adjective to a plural noun, we also do the same by adding the suffix to the adjective.

For example, "The horse is big" is written as:

סוּם הַגָּדוֹל

When we want to say that "the horses are big", we have to add the suffix to both the noun and the adjective.

סוּמִים הַגָּדוֹלִים

Finally, in Hebrew, every noun is either masculine or feminine. This has been the case since the ancient days. In a patriarchal society, it is understandable that most nouns are male, unless indicated otherwise. This is why if you refer to page 59, you will notice that when the verb does not have any pronoun suffix, it automatically refers to a male person.

There are some other examples of peculiarities in the Hebrew language. All you need now is to just get some exposure so that you will be able to follow the lessons taught in a good Hebrew class.

Our Rich Heritage

LEARNING TO READ Hebrew is the key that you need to open the door to a beautiful world outside.

Because our Old Testament is written in ancient Hebrew, we have such a great heritage right from the days of Abraham and Sarah. We call this our Hebraic roots.

To be able to exegete the Old Testament, we cannot help but learn to exegete the text using its original language. Great theologians and preachers of the Word of God are able to dig deep into the text because they learnt and understood both Hebrew and Greek. Most great scientists in the past were also students of either one of the biblical languages.

I will give you some examples:

1 The word 'HaShem' may sound like the name of a person. However, the Hebrew word is **הַשֵּׁם**. What this means is simply: 'The Name.' Whenever a Jewish rabbi sees God's Name which is written as **יְהוָה**, he feels unworthy to even pronounce the Name but he would say with great reverence, **הַשֵּׁם**. In Ezekiel 43, we read that **הַשֵּׁם** came into the temple, with the sound of many waters and the earth shone with His glory.

2 Did you know how the name Jesus came about? During His time spent with His family and His disciples, they would have called him, **יֵשׁוּעַ** or *Yeshua* in Hebrew. This is a shortening of a common name in Hebrew, **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** (*Yehoshua*) which means 'Saviour.'

The name *Yehoshua* **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** is made up of two parts:

- "Yeho-" **יְהוֹ** which is another way of writing God's name, **יְהוָה**

- "shua" שׁוּעַ which is a noun that gives the meaning of a shout for rescue. It is "a cry for help" or "a saving cry".

Imagine the jet fighter is about the crash and the pilot screaming over the radio, שׁוּעַ instead of "Mayday, Mayday!"

Yehoshua	
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	
שׁוּעַ Shua	יְהוֹ Yeho-

This perfect picture of who our Saviour is, is somehow lost when the name was gradually translated from Hebrew to Greek, and from Greek to Latin, and finally, we have the name Jesus. Until we understand the original meaning of the name, we would not be able to grasp the true meaning of the name Jesus.

Hebrew	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
Greek	Ἰησους
Latin	Iesus
English	Jesus

3 This Jesus was crucified on a hill known as the place of a skull. In Hebrew, the word is *Gulgoleth* (גִּלְגֻּלֶּת). This brings us to Numbers 1:2 where a census was decreed. We get a better insight into the meaning of the word *Golgotha* from the usage of the word, לְגִלְגֻּלֶּתָם (lə•gūl•gə•lō•tām) which is translated as 'head-by-head'. The headcount had to be done head-by-head. Indeed, by His death on the hill of *Gulgoleth*, Jesus paid for the penalty of sins, and it is meant for anyone and everyone who receives Him. Are we willing to be part of this headcount?

4 When we read Exodus 20:4, in the New American Standard Bible, it says: “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.”

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל
וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר
בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר
בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר
בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ

Because the English language does not differentiate between the plural and the singular form of you, we cannot be sure if God addressed the Israelites as a people or individually.

Thankfully, the Hebrew language differentiates the plural from the singular you with the use of one letter ך in the word, לְךָ. From here, we know that, although there were thousands of Israelites standing before Moses, yet the Ten Commandments were given to them as individuals. The ‘you’ in the singular emphasises their personal and ethical character.

5 There are countless of other examples, but it is good to know that Hebrew names have meanings behind them. Do you know what King Saul’s name represents? Although he was the first king over Israel, his name שָׁאֻל uses the same consonants for the word, *Sheol* שְׁאֻל, which means (Oh! Oh!), ‘the place where the dead go’. If you replace the last letter with the *sofit nun* ך you will get the word שְׁאוֹן, which means ‘destruction.’ That’s really not a good name to have. No wonder after Saul was converted along the road to Damascus, his name was changed to Paul.

⑥ Did you know that the word שֶׁקֶד (almond) is derived from the root word שָׁקַד (which means, to keep watch, be vigilant, or be awake)? Somehow this idea is lost when we read the passage in Jeremiah 1:11-12:

"The word of the Lord came to me saying, 'What do you see, Jeremiah?' And I said, 'I see a rod of an almond tree.' Then the Lord said to me, 'You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.'"

Now, we understand Hebrew words for almond and being watchful are from the same roots. God was using the almond rod to explain about His calling to Jeremiah to be always watchful. The almond tree is always "watchful/awake". It is also the first tree that blossoms every year, while other trees continue their winter slumber.

Resources Available

THESE DAYS, THERE are plenty of resources that can help you learn Hebrew. Each resource material is designed for a specific purpose. This book, for example, is to bridge the Valley of Intimidation that separates you from the Hebrew Bible and hence, depriving you of our rich Hebraic roots.

Most of these resources are available on the Internet. Therefore, if you are really serious about learning the Hebrew language, you should also pick up some IT literacy. You need to be able to download the applications onto your smart phone, too.

Interlinear Bibles

There are many interlinear Bibles available for free. You can use *www.biblehub.com*, *www.biblegateway.com*, *www.youversion.com*, *TheBible.com*, *BlueLetterBible.Org*, *Bible.IS* and many more.

All you need to do is to search for Hebrew Bible or Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible. You have to pick one that you find most suitable for you.

You can also invest in the Hebrew Bible on Accordance or Logos. This will give you access to a wonderful pool of knowledge. By highlighting on a particular Hebrew word that you do not know, you can instantly see the meaning of the word. You can also purchase the Hebrew audio Bible on Accordance. This will allow you to follow closely the way how the text is being read to check your pronunciation. I use Accordance a lot because it is like a one-stop centre.

For a free copy of the Hebrew Bible, you can download from here:

- http://www.firstsundayapril.info/about_pics/thetanakh.pdf

- <http://www.ericlevy.com/Revel/Bible/HebrewOT.pdf>

There are also free Hebrew Bible readers that you can download to your mobile phone. Search for Hebrew Bible reader on Google Play or Play Store. You can also use this link to access the Bible reader: <http://www.animatedhebrew.com/reader/ot/index.html>

Flashcards

You can create your own flashcards. Or, you can visit these links to access the flashcards prepared by other students of Hebrew:

Course A: <https://decks.memrise.com/course/437754/biblical-hebrew-a-vocab/>

Course B: <https://decks.memrise.com/course/551824/biblical-hebrew-b-vocab/>

Course C: <https://decks.memrise.com/course/582843/biblical-hebrew-c-vocab-2/>

This is a very useful way to remember new words. You can also place cards all over the place. Soon, these words will become part of your vocabulary.



There are also other memory aids that can be used. Recently, I set the dates on my mobile phone to include the Jewish calendar. That way, I can learn the months in a year. I started on 1 Tishri 5780 being the New Year (Rosh

Hashana) in the Jewish calendar. After one or two years, the names of the months would stick with me, without having to go through the memorisation of the months.

Apps on Mobile phones

These days, with smartphones, it is possible to turn them into our language tutor. There are a number of applications that you can download on your phone. Just search for 'Hebrew' and you will get a number of Apps that will help you learn Hebrew.

My 8-year-old girl loves to play the Hebrew word game. While travelling home, she has some "idle" time. That's when I allow her to use my mobile phone to access the Hebrew app. We even learn words from Modern Hebrew together to add to our vocabulary.

Hebrew Lexicons and Dictionaries

It is important to invest in a good Hebrew Lexicon and / or Biblical Hebrew dictionary. Some of these are available online. Accordance, for example, also has the Hebrew Lexicon and Bible dictionaries that come along with the Learner's Package.

With the Lexicons, you have to know the root word in order to search for the meaning of a word. Good lexicons will shed light to the words that you read in your Hebrew Bible.

Sing Some Hebrew Songs

Most of us can remember better when we sing songs. Songs are also a good way to relax the minds. As you sing, you will pick up the vocabulary as well.

Calligraphy Pens

A number of bookshops sell calligraphy pens which are useful for writing Hebrew. They are specially designed



for Chinese calligraphy but can also be used for writing Hebrew.

Familiarise yourself with your Hebrew keyboard

You can download the Hebrew keyboard on your laptop and smartphones. For Microsoft, go to “Settings”, look for “Time & Languages” and pick “Languages”. Add preferred language “Hebrew” to your list. You can then switch between English and Hebrew using the same keyboard.

For both Android and Apple phones, go to “Settings”, choose “General” and look for “Keyboard”. Add new keyboards to the phone.

It will take some practice to be able to type with the Hebrew keyboard as they are not arranged in the same order as the keyboard for the English alphabet that we are already familiar with.

Start A Community of Learners

Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

In learning a language, we need a group of friends. It is easy these days to set up a chat group strictly on learning Hebrew. Get members to post new words that they learn.

You can also get members of your cell group to embark on the journey together. Once you have learned to read the Hebrew Bible, you can do it once a week for 15 minutes.

Plug Yourself into a Programme Proper

In order to learn Hebrew, it is necessary for you to attend classes. There are also e-classes available online which you need to pay in US Dollars, and this can be quite expensive.

Most seminaries would offer Biblical Hebrew modules which allows you to do it consistently through a period of six months to a year.

There will also be workshops available. It is important for you to plug yourself into a chat group with people having the same interest. That way, you will be informed of any workshops on Hebrew that are available.

Start them Young

As you learn Hebrew yourself, encourage your children to do it together with you. Start them young and someday, they will be grateful to you for having encouraged them to learn Hebrew.

Get a seminary student who has learned Hebrew or is still learning the language to teach a few words to Sunday School children every week. We all learn by having the exposure to new words every day. Many of us are familiar with Greek words because they appear in our daily vocabulary or our pastors use these words in their sermons. For example, *baptizo*, *agape*, *philo* and *pneuma*. We should do the same with Hebrew so that the younger generation will find it easy to learn the language later on in life.

As a child, I used to hear the song, *Shalom Chaverim* but I did not know it was a Hebrew song until I started learning Hebrew. Now, I know the meaning of the words that I sing.

Keep Learning!

THIS BOOK IS SPECIALLY designed to help you start learning Hebrew from Ground Zero. You will need to build on this foundation with the bricks and mortar.

It is my prayer that this book will help you to no longer feel intimidated when you see a Hebrew text; thereafter, I pray that you will embark on your journey to learning Hebrew. It is a lifelong learning experience.

There are really no shortcuts to learning a language but your love for Elohim will drive you to learn the language which will help you to better understand your Old Testament.

The reason why I am able to pick up the language within just four months is because of my passion to learn it. Passion is what drives us to achieve great things. Without passion, you will never get anywhere in life. Likewise, it may take you four years to learn what you could have done in four months!

Many of us have a lot of idle time that we can occupy with the learning of Hebrew. Those who us who complain that we do not have time in fact do have a lot of time to waste on watching a video or reading messages on social media. We wait for our clients or our children, and time is always wasted that way. With your mobile phone now, you can turn it into a learning tool!

Elohim has given us so many resources that we no longer have any excuse if we do not learn the language. There are books and language packs available from bookshops. With the Internet resources online that are also easily accessible, you will not regret it when you use the Search engine to look for some keywords such as 'Hebrew',

'niquods', 'Hebrew songs', to mention a few. With these resources available to us for free, you will be able to learn the language so much better than those who have no access to the Internet.

So, may the Lord bless you richly as you learn Hebrew! Amen and Amen.

Answer to Word Search on page 41

ז	ח	ם	ל	ו	ח	ד	ל	ז	ז
ל	ז	ך	ז	י	ח	ש	כ	ל	
ך	ד	ק	י	ר	ח	י	ך	ז	
ס	ך	ד	ס	ך	י	ד	ב	ע	
ד	י	כ	ד	ח	ק	ו	ו	ש	
א	ו	ש	ח	ז	ד	ז	כ	י	

Interlude

Relax, scan the QR codes and enjoy the music.



*Psalm 23
version 1*



*Psalm 23
version 2*



Bo' Ruach Elohim



*Kadosh, Kadosh,
Kadosh*



Shalom Chaverim



Shema Israel

Appendix

Vocabulary

shofar	שׁוֹפָר
father	אָב
mother	אִם
mountain	הַר
stream, river	נָהָר
shalom, peace	שָׁלוֹם
people, nation	עַם
young man, lad	נֶעָר
towards	אֶל
from	מִן
no, not	לֹא
he said	אָמַר
he saw	רָאָה
Adam, mankind	אָדָם

he said

וַתֹּאמֶר

Bethlehem

בֵּית לֶחֶם

clean

טָהוֹר

food, bread

לֶחֶם

cymbal

צִלְצִלִי

fish

דָּג

big

גָּדוֹל

big fish

דָּג גָּדוֹל

money

כֶּסֶף

without form and in a
state of chaos

תְּהוֹ וְבְהוֹ

darkness

חֹשֶׁךְ

hovering

מְרַחֶפֶת

deep

תְּהוֹם

upon, or above

עַל-

water

מַיִם

heavens	שָׁמַיִם
Hebrew	עִבְרִי
he created	בָּרָא
name	שֵׁם
sea	יָם
child	יֶלֶד
hand	יָד
king	מֶלֶךְ
man	אִישׁ
dust	עָפָר
between	בֵּין
he walked	הֶלֶךְ
morning	בֹּקֶר
good	טוֹב

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150RT

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1Ton

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Patents

60⁺



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